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American Cassandra

A SHORT but unique piece of research published in New York last year might well change our whole understanding of human history. It sheds a new light on the Biblical legends, Greek mythology and much more.

For instance, we have a new picture of Cassandra. The beautiful daughter of Priam of Troy, beloved by Apollo, she was accorded by him the gift of prophecy. But women are not to be relied upon—Cassandra did not keep her promise and Apollo punished her by adding to his gift the qualification that her prophecies should not be believed. And though she rightly predicted that the rape of Helen would spell the ruin of Troy and warned about the Trojan Horse, her warnings were disregarded, with calamitous results for the Trojans.

That is the legend as we know it. But now we are told that Homer was unaware of Cassandra's real role. She was, this study tells us, the mother of espionage, and in a certain sense the prototype of the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency.

For it turns out that Cassandra's prediction of the imminent fall of Troy was "one of the first recorded intelligence operations." And as an intelligence operator Cassandra was at the top of the profession. But the politicians, then and in later times, ignored such advice. That seems to be a general rule: "It is a part of history that intelligence should all too

often be disregarded or sometimes not even sought."

That complaint, in fact, is the central premise of this learned investigation, "The Craft of Intelligence." It provides a new interpretation of practically all the major events of history. This is its philosophy: human progress is promoted not by the scientist or statesman, the engineer or physician, the philosopher or poet, and certainly not by the masses. Human progress depends on espionage; everything that does not fall in the category of professional espionage is of secondary importance.

That profound thought comes not from a reader of mystery stories, but from a man who has made espionage his profession, Allen Dulles, former director of the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency. He shows up the intelligence angle of the Biblical legend about the Jews' exodus from Egypt. They spent forty years in the desert searching for the land of Canaan, though it was only a short distance away. Why? The Bible gives us no definite answer. But Mr. Dulles does: there was a woeful lack of intelligence. Moses and Aaron sent tribal chiefs to find out about the land of Israel. That was a gross error, and Mr. Dulles tells us why: "One would not send political leaders on an intelligence mission. One would send technicians and surely not twelve but two or three."

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